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ON PAGE 2

## Journal Reporter Is Still Being Held By the Iranians

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON — Wall Street Journal Middle East correspondent Gerald F. Seib, who was detained by Iranian authorities in Tehran on Saturday, was still being held.

U.S. officials said neither they nor the Swiss government, which represents Washington in Iran, had received any word from Iranian officials concerning Mr. Seib's whereabouts or whether any charges had been brought against him.

"Mr. Seib continues to be held by the Iranians and is prevented from leaving Iran," said State Department spokesman Charles Redman. "The Swiss Embassy, our protecting power in Iran, is protesting Mr. Seib's detention and demanding his immediate release. Seib, who was invited to Iran by the government there, should be released now and permitted to depart Iran. His continued detention is unwarranted."



Gerald F. Seib

Wall Street Journal editors and executives met with Secretary of State George Shultz yesterday. Mr. Shultz expressed his concern and support for Mr. Seib.

"He (Mr. Seib) is being held by the government of Iran. No charges have been filed," said Warren H. Phillips, chairman of Dow Jones & Co., which publishes The Wall Street Journal. "We believe a dreadful mistake has been made and we hope, we fervently hope, that the government of Iran will realize it has made a mistake and set him free."

Mr. Phillips added: "We are working through many diplomatic channels, including Iranian diplomatic channels and others, and we are trying to convey that this is a well-respected American reporter who has been seized without any cause at all."

Mr. Seib had spent 10 days in Iran as part of a group of 57 correspondents who were invited by the Iranian government to tour the front lines of Iran's war with Iraq. Along with a Swiss diplomat, he was ordered into a van in front of his hotel in Tehran at about 6 p.m. Saturday. The

Swiss diplomat was released after he identified himself.

Mr. Seib had sought help from the Swiss Embassy after immigration authorities impounded his passport Thursday as he made plans to leave the country. The U.S. has had no diplomatic ties to Tehran since the U.S. Embassy there was stormed on Nov.

4, 1979, and its staff then held hostage for 444 days.

The Swiss ambassador to Tehran has tried to make an appointment with the Iranian foreign ministry to protest the detention and gain more details concerning Mr. Seib's whereabouts and possible charges against him. But U.S. officials said late yesterday that the ambassador hadn't yet been granted an appointment.

Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency, or IRNA, reported Saturday evening that "a spy of the Zionist regime" had entered Iran posing as a journalist and using a false passport. The three-paragraph report didn't name the alleged spy or give his nationality. Iran has never linked the news report to Mr. Seib.

It was unclear why the 30-year-old, Cairo, Egypt-based correspondent had been singled out for detention from the other journalists. "At this point, we don't have any explanation," said Mr. Redman, the State Department spokesman.

A report datelined Tehran and distributed yesterday by the South-North News Service, a small agency with offices in New Hampshire, quoted an unnamed source in the Iranian intelligence agency as saying Mr. Seib was being held in solitary confinement. The source was also quoted as asserting that Mr. Seib had collected sensitive information about Iranian military defenses and that unspecified charges would be made against him.

Norman Pearlstine, managing editor of The Wall Street Journal, said: "This report carries no official statement by anyone in the Iranian government. It is a speculative account quoting only unnamed sources. There has been no accusation made against Jerry Seib, nor is there any basis for one. He is a respected American journalist traveling on a valid passport who entered Iran at the government's invitation. We continue to urge Mr. Seib's immediate release from detention."

The South-North report also said "it is understood here (in Tehran) that Seib is Jewish." In fact, Mr. Seib is Roman Catholic.

In his role as a Middle East correspondent for the Journal, Mr. Seib traveled throughout the region, reporting not only from Cairo, but from nearly every Middle East nation. Several nonpartisan organizations appealed to the Iranian government to release him.

The Cairo Foreign Press Association, which represents more than 150 journalists from 30 countries, expressed its "deep concern," and called Mr. Seib "a respected member of the association and a correspondent whose integrity is widely respected by his colleagues in the Middle East."

The Committee to Protect Journalists, a New York-based group working on behalf of journalists world-wide, sent a telegram to Iranian Prime Minister Mirhossein Mousavi saying that Mr. Seib was pursuing only journalistic activities in Iran and was there at the government's invitation. The group urged the Iranians to release the reporter.

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, an association of reporters and editors based in Washington, protested the detention in a cablegram to the Ministry of Islamic Guidance in Tehran, which had organized the journalists' visit to that country.